

This is a Federal issue, in my judgment, because of the costs of litigation—how it affects the Federal budget. It affects the cost of Medicare. Lawsuits affect the cost of Medicaid. It affects the cost of veterans' health care. It is a national issue that requires a national solution. And that national solution says people ought to have their day in court. But junk lawsuits make it harder for somebody who's actually been hurt to have their day in court. It also recognizes bad doctors need to be punished, something good doctors fully subscribe to. It recognizes that people ought to be able to recover their economic damages, but there needs to be a hard cap of \$250,000 on non-economic damages. And we need to make sure that we have a reasonable cap on punitive damages.

This is a necessary part of health care reform. It is necessary to keep docs in business. It is necessary to keep consumers in a position where they can have affordable and available health care. The House has passed the bill. The Senate needs to pass the bill. And if you're interested in medical liability reform, you ought to contact the United States Senators from the State in which you live and let them know your opinion.

I believe we can get things done in Washington, DC, if we remember whose time we're on. We're on the people's time in the Nation's Capital. We spend—we're there to get the job done. By working together, we can make sure this country is more secure and, I believe, the world more peaceful. And by working together, we can make sure that our folks have got economic security and, as importantly, health security.

I want to thank you for giving me the chance to come today to talk about an exciting opportunity for those of us who are honored to serve the American people—the opportunity to bring Medicare into the 21st century, so we can look our seniors in the eye and say we were called to solve a problem, and by working together, we were able to solve that problem, not only for this generation but for future generations to come.

Thanks for your time. May God bless you. May God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:03 p.m. in the cafeteria at New Britain General Hospital. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Nancy L. Johnson of Connecticut.

Statement on the Death of David Brinkley

June 12, 2003

David Brinkley was a pioneer of broadcast journalism. He was respected for his integrity, admired for his candor and wit, and distinguished by an exceptional career

that spanned more than a half century. Laura joins me in offering our heartfelt condolences to Susan and the entire Brinkley family.